

**DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL
PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY**

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| Reviewed: | November 2022 |
| Agreed: | November 2022 |
| Next Review Due: | November 2024 |
| Person Responsible: | The Head Teacher |

MISSION STATEMENT:

To deal quickly and fairly with incidents of bullying whilst actively promoting the prevention of bullying.

GOALS:

Customer Goal: To create a safe, happy, friendly, purposeful and secure environment for all students, staff and adults (including all visitors).

Curriculum Goal: To convey information about all aspects of bullying and how students and staff can help prevent bullying. To educate all students who display bullying behaviour in order to change and improve their short and long term choices of behaviour.

Community Goal: To encourage every person at Darrick Wood School to be actively involved in preventing incidents of bullying taking place.

Quality Goal: To increase our understanding of the different types of bullying and reduce the actual incidence of bullying.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Everyone at Darrick Wood School has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve their full potential. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

It is everybody's responsibility to banish bullying and this policy contains guidelines for doing so. Our key aim is to prevent bullying in being proactive in our response to staff and student concerns.

Where bullying exists, the targets must feel confident to report it. We aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied students and help build an anti-bullying ethos in school. We are a 'telling' school; this means that anyone who knows, or suspects bullying is happening is encouraged to tell a member of staff as soon as possible.

We recognise the need to acknowledge that some children are more at risk of potential targeting by bullying behaviour. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) emphasises the additional safeguarding challenges for children with SEN and Disabilities, including the higher risk of peer group isolation, the disproportionate impact of bullying, and possible difficulties with communication.

Vulnerable students are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable students may include, but are not limited to

- Students with SEND
- CLA (Children Looked After - Children who are in the care of the Local Authority) students
- Students suffering from a health problem
- Students with caring responsibilities

Students with certain characteristics are also more like to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to

- Students who are, or who are perceived to be, LGBTQ+
- Students from BAME backgrounds
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds

1. What is Bullying?

The government defines bullying as

“behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”.

Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, 2017, DfE

It is the wilful, persistent, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying is an abuse of power. There are generally three components to bullying:

Power imbalance – there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the two parties. This imbalance can be physical strength, age, social status or access to information. The bully can be looking to assert their power and may be looking to gain materials or money

Repeated – the action of the bully is generally repeated, occurring time after time

Intentional – the target does not knowingly provoke the bully. The bully is intentional with their behaviour and actions. The victim will show a strong emotional reaction to the incident whereas the bully will have less or no reaction

A person is bullied when they are exposed regularly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more persons.

Bullying can be:

- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, stealing possessions
- **Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, teasing, sexual remarks, racist language, homophobic comments
- **Emotional** – spreading rumours, tormenting, excluding, graffiti, gestures
- **Technological** – the negative use of texting, group chats, voice mails, social media, using camera phones, prank calls, chat rooms

This policy applies to all students on site and when they are travelling to or from school. It also applies when a student is taking part in any school related activity or if they are in some other way identifiable as a student at the school.

2. What is the Difference Between Peer Conflict and Bullying?

Having disagreements with peers is a normal developmental task of childhood; bullying, whilst it may be a common childhood experience, should not be tolerated. Trying to discern the two can be difficult and each situation must be looked at closely.

In normal peer conflicts:

- The children are equal in terms of their perceived power; they may have been friends
- It happens occasionally; there will be periods of increased incidents and then it calms down
- Remarks can be unintentional but have caused offense to others
- There is an equal emotional reaction to the conflict
- Both parties show remorse and are willing to find a solution and move on
- It can start as a joke or hassling between friends that then goes too far
- It can be an overly aggressive reaction from a provocation

Conflict can be a good thing for children to experience – helping them to learn how to resolve conflict, how to give and take, how to come to an agreement and how to problem solve. Developing conflict resolution skills in children can teach how to listen to and work with others. In the case of peer conflict, a restorative discussion or mediation often proves more effective than punishments.

After investigating an incident, staff will determine whether it is a peer conflict or bullying. This may affect how it is dealt with. In both instances it may be most appropriate to sit all parties down and to talk about the issues together. It is important that all students involved understand the impact of their actions. Sanctions may be issued for peer conflict and bullying incidents; all cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.

3. Cyber Bullying

The irresponsible use of technologies such as mobile phones and social media to intimidate others is an increasing national trend. Bullying by text, phone calls, emails or social media often leave no physical scars but can be highly intrusive and harmful. The School will continue to enforce its policies regarding mobile phone use. And our acceptable usage policy for IT.

Where any form of cyber bullying affects another student in the school or may bring the reputation of the school into disrepute, the School reserves the right to be involved whether or not the electronic material was produced within the School or outside. Furthermore, the school will review electronic material held or accessed by any student in the school including their email account and their mobile phone if we suspect cyber bullying is occurring. Students must be aware that some forms and levels of cyber bullying are illegal, and the school will inform the police and social services where necessary.

4. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A student may display signs or behaviour that indicate that they are involved in a peer dispute or being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate if a child

- Is frightened of getting to or from school whether by walking or on the bus
- Changes their usual routines
- Is unwilling to attend school, or begins to arrive at school very early or late
- Begins truanting
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill in the morning
- Decline in school performance
- Has money or other possessions that get lost on a regular basis
- Has unexplained injuries or is seen regularly with clothes or books destroyed
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable

- Is being unkind to other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

This is by no means an exhaustive list. These are signs and could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered.

5. Actions to Prevent Bullying

At Darrick Wood School we are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of bullying seriously. We use the curriculum and other appropriate times to reinforce the ethos of our school and help students to develop strategies that combat bullying-type behaviour. We strive to organise our community to minimise opportunities for bullying, for example, teacher supervision during break and lunch time. We use a variety of methods to help students prevent bullying as and when appropriate including

- Assemblies
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular tutor periods and PSHE classes where issues of diversity are discussed, and anti-bullying messages are drawn out
- Participating in nationwide anti-bullying weeks
- CCTV around the site
- Internet Awareness week and lessons
- Posters and displays around the school
- Behaviour plans
- Celebrating positive achievements
- Student surveys
- Break and lunchtime supervision by staff and prefects
- Sixth Form mentors
- Social skills training and development
- Specialist members of staff, such as ELSAs, to support students in dealing with incidents appropriately
- Regular contact and liaison with our Safer Schools Police Officer

6. Actions to Tackle Bullying

Students

- Students are encouraged to report possible bullying to any member of staff, a friend, or a member of their family as soon as possible
- Students need to identify the perpetrators and where the incident took place so that it can be investigated
- Students should pass on any evidence that they have including social media posts, text messages or videos
- Students who witness bullying should also tell someone as soon as possible

Staff

- All staff are responsible for the health and wellbeing of students and have a duty to respond seriously to any claim of bullying
- If staff are unable to investigate the matter, they must refer it to the Achievement Coordinator or Assistant Head Teacher for the year group
- Staff will log behaviour incidents in the appropriate manner including any details of outcomes

Parents/Carers

- Parents and carers are encouraged to share any concerns with their child's Form Tutor, Achievement Coordinator, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team

- If the perpetrator is known, then this information needs to be shared with school staff so that incidents can be dealt with
- The School will deal with all reported bullying incidents – parents cannot expect the school not to act once an incident is reported
- Parents should be monitoring their child’s use of the internet and of social media platforms, and taking appropriate action when necessary. This monitoring should also include checking access to age appropriate sites.
- Parents may be invited to attend meetings in school to discuss an issue
- Parents need to be aware that the police may be consulted on any bullying incident

Governors

- Monitor the School’s actions to prevent bullying.

7. Outcomes

Victim

- The bullying behaviours will stop
- The victim will be consulted on how to rebuild relationships with the perpetrator if they want to do this
- The victim will be giving information on support services that they can access both in person and online. A referral to the school counselling team or to Bromley Y may be considered
- Interventions may be put in place to support the target and support them in developing appropriate skills to protect themselves from bullying behaviours

Perpetrator

- The perpetrator will be helped to realise that bullying will not be tolerated, that it must stop immediately and that there can be no reoccurrence
- Students are helped to reflect upon their actions, to empathise with the other party and restorative work will take place
- Students who have been bullied are supported to modify their behaviour; this may be through individual or group interventions, including additional pastoral support and involvement of parents
- The perpetrator will be asked at a suitable point to genuinely apologise; this may be in writing or in person depending on what the victim feels comfortable with
- The perpetrator may be required to move class or tutor group
- A sanction will be issued in line with our behaviour policy.
- Sanctions will be escalated if the bullying behaviour does not stop.
- The incident may be reported to the police and students may have to meet with the School’s Police Officer

Parents/carers

- Parents/carers of both the victim and the perpetrator will be kept informed throughout the process. We are unable to share the outcomes of what happens with specific individuals.
- Available support will be shared with the parents/carers of both parties
- Parent views will be taken into account but the school will stress that wherever possible reconciliation will be considered in order to provide clear resolution for all concerned whilst not condoning the bullying
- Parents to be aware that if the bullying behaviours continue then the perpetrator will receive escalated sanctions and they may be permanently excluded from school